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SUGGESTION

Procurement of exceptional talent is hampered by the fact that young people possess little accurate knowledge of what intelligence is all about. The "cloak and dagger" conception cultivated by the movies and adventure stories dominates the public mind. CIA has adopted the policy that, to quote General Smith, "There ought to be at least one silent service in our Government." It is suggested, however, that the Intelligence Services of all foreign governments who, indeed, are those from whom our secrets are to be hidden, are fully aware of the purposes and many of the processes of overt intelligence. CIA is, therefore, not hiding this sort of material from those who would use it against us, but from the American public from whom it draws its support, its finances, and not unimportant, its personnel. It would appear, therefore, that to inaugurate a program to familiarize our citizens with certain facts about the profession of intelligence, not specifically directed toward CIA but including all agencies overtly using professionals, would produce salutary results.

To tell Americans of (a) the importance of intelligence to National security, (b) the various Government agencies including CIA in which intelligence is used, (c) the opportunities for careers in the profession of intelligence, and (d) the wide variety of specialized training which is useful in the fields of intelligence would serve to enlist the interest of many very able young people who now, through ignorance of its opportunities, choose other occupations. CIA would undoubtedly draw its fair quota of applicants along with other agencies such as State, F.B.I., A.E.C., and so on. Already there is precedent for giving out this type of information; witness the books by CIA employees and others and the recent articles and editorials in magazines and the press.

It is hoped that some activity of this nature can be instituted, particularly in the colleges and universities where already there are provisions for giving advice to students on all the other professions. Such a program not only would stimulate interest in and respect for our profession, but also would assist in maintaining high standards. As an example of the latter, it is pointed out that every pre-medical student knows early in his college days that he must make high grades if he is to be admitted to a good medical school. Why should not a young person hoping to enter the profession of intelligence know that the same quality of performance will be required of him and the reasons for it, if he is to enter Career Service in CIA?

While no doubt there are disadvantages to such a proposal, it is contended that they would be far outweighed by the benefits to be derived in the number and quality of candidates and in the public support which could be developed from it, not only for CIA, but all other Government agencies.